

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Fish and Wildlife Service

Washington, D. C.

March 18, 1942

RELEASE MARCH 29

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TRAPPERS AND U. S. TREASURY SHARE
MUSKRAT PROFIT ON WILDLIFE REFUGE

Muskrats have become such a profitable sideline during the trapping season at the Seney National Wildlife Refuge in Michigan that they have just about stolen the waterfowl show there, says the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

Taken under permit by local trappers and shared 50-50 by the Government and the trappers, more than 10,000 pelts last year netted the United States Treasury over \$6,000 and brought 25 local trappers around \$200 apiece. The 1942 season is still under way.

State officials last year also took 700 muskrats alive for transplanting.

Muskrat Success Unexpected

Before establishment of the 93,000-acre refuge, a large muskrat-farming effort was one of many unprofitable ventures on this area. Even experts had concluded that the Seney marshes were of such a character that muskrat farming would be impracticable.

After CCC and other development work was carried on to make the marshes a waterfowl refuge in fact as well as name, the muskrats increased so rapidly that they threatened interference with the main purpose of the refuge.

This has been easily handled, however, and profitably for all concerned. Local trappers are given permits to take muskrats. Refuge officials supervise the program and give the trappers use of a fur house. The trappers get half the pelts, which they sell for themselves, and the other half are sold by the Fish and Wildlife Service for the benefit of the United States Treasury, 25 percent of the Government's proceeds being returned to the local county authorities for schools and roads.

NOTE TO EDITORS: The cut lines that follow are also on the backs of the prints which are enclosed. **PLEASE USE CREDIT LINES AS SHOWN.**

IN PERSON.--The muskrat produces more fur than any other animal in the United States and on many areas provides farmers and other landowners a profitable side line. (Fish and Wildlife Service Photo by Ward M. Sharp.)

FIRST STEP.--Edward H. Mattson, of Newberry, Mich., share trapper with a Fish and Wildlife Service permit, sets one of his muskrat traps on the Seney National Wildlife Refuge, near Germfask, Mich. (CCC Photo by W. J. Mead.)

O. K.--Seney Refuge Manager Clarence S. Johnson (right) inspects muskrat pelts that have been trapped, skinned, stretched, and fleshed by Trapper Edward H. Mattson. (CCC Photo by W. J. Mead.)

ON THE LINE.--Share-trapper Mattson hangs his furs in the refuge boathouse which has been made available for a fur house during the trapping season as part of the Fish and Wildlife Service's cooperation with the trappers. (CCC Photo by W. J. Mead.)

THROUGH THE MILL.--(Right to left) Inspector Paul Knuth, Refuge Biologist John L. Sypulski, WPA Research Assistant James Mosher, and Patrolman Axel Mortenson stamping and bundling pelts. Records are kept of the pelts, and studies are carried on to add to the Service's data on muskrats. (CCC Photo by W. J. Mead.)

ON TO THE AUCTIONS.--Trapping Inspector Paul Knuth (left) and Patrolman Axel Mortenson baling part of the Government's share of the Seney muskrat pelts, which will be sold, 75 percent of the proceeds going into the United States Treasury and 25 percent being returned to local county authorities for schools and roads. (CCC Photo by W. J. Mead.)

TAKING HOME THE PELTS.--Trapper Edward H. Mattson displays some of the pelts which he has received as his 50-50 share of the Seney Refuge muskrat harvest and which he will sell for himself. (CCC Photo by W. J. Mead.)